

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /018 W  
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O R 131610Z JAN 76  
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE  
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
AMCONSUL BELIZE  
SECSTATE WASHDC 9632

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 0201

FOR AMBASSADOR TODMAN

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINR, GT  
SUBJECT: BIO INFORMATION - FONMIN MOLINA

REF: SAN JOSE 0130

1. ADOLFO MOLINA ORANTES HAS SERVED AS FONMIN SINCE PRESIDENT LAUGERUD WAS INAUGURATED JULY 1, 1974. SEVERAL FACTORS PROBABLY FIGURED IN LAUGERUD'S SELECTION: (A) MOLINA WAS AN ACKNOWLEDGED EXPERT ON THE BELIZE ISSUE, AND HIS VIEWS WERE REPORTEDLY SIMILAR TO LAUGERUD'S; (B) HE HAD AN EXTREMELY HIGH REPUTATION AS AN INTERNATIONAL LAWYER AND LAW PROFESSOR; (C) ALTHOUGH A CONSERVATIVE, HE WAS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY.

2. GUATEMALA'S FOREIGN POLICY HORIZONS ARE QUITE LIMITED, AND HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR BELIZE, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT MOLINA WOULD HAVE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION. MOLINA HAS DEVOTED MOST OF HIS ENERGY TO THE BELIZE QUESTION, AND DURING RECENT MONTHS, HIS ROLE HAS BEEN CRUCIAL. IN OUR VIEW, MOLINA'S WILLINGNESS TO ACT CALMLY AND RESPONSIBLY DID MUCH TO AVERT AN ARMED CLASH OVER BELIZE. HIS ACTIONS EARNED HIM NOT ONLY OUR RESPECT, BUT THE RESPECT OF THE  
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BRITISH AS WELL.

3. MOLINA WAS BORN 25 MARCH 1915. HE GRADUATED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN CARLOS LAW SCHOOL, AND LATER WON A LA GUARDIA FELLOWSHIP IN INTERNATIONAL LAW AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY (1943 TO 1945). HE HAS TAUGHT INTERNATIONAL LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA, HOLDS AN HONORARY DOCTORATE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, AND IS A FORMER DEAN OF THE SAN CARLOS LAW SCHOOL. HE IS A PAST PRESIDENT OF THE GUATEMALAN BAR ASSOCIATION AND OF THE OAS INTER-AMERICAN JURIDICAL COMMITTEE. HE WAS THE FIRST NON-BRAZILIAN TO HOLD THE IAJC POST.

4. MOLINA WAS ONE OF THE ATTORNEYS WHO SUCCESSFULLY ARGUED GUATEMALA'S SIDE OF THE FAMOUS NOTTEBOHM CASE (GUATEMALA VS. LIECHTENSTEIN) AT THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE. AFTER THE COURT RULED IN GUATEMALA'S BEHALF HE BECAME SOMETHING OF A NATIONAL CELEBRITY.

5. MOLINA HAS TWICE BEEN DESIGNATED AS GUATEMALA'S MEMBER OF THE PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION. IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO HIS SELECTION AS FONMIN HE SERVED A FOUR-YEAR TERM AS THE GUATEMALAN JUDICIARY'S DELEGATE TO THE COUNCIL OF STATE.

6. IN 1975 MOLINA WAS ELECTED HEAD OF THE OAS POLITICAL COUNCIL.  
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